

# The Hour



*"keeps up with Hitler to the minute"*

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## AND OTHER ITEMS

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## IS BUND'S TREASURER DEAD?

### Strange Case of Richard J. Mettin Is Being Investigated

On May 18 last, the German-American Bund announced the death of Richard J. Mettin, its national treasurer. The background of the story is as follows:

On Saturday, May 6, a man purporting to be Richard J. Mettin became ill at 29 Norwood Avenue, Clifton, Staten Island. This address was the residence of the Richard J. Mettin who was the Bund's national treasurer. A local physician, Dr. Henry Briggin, was called in and found septicemia, a blood infection, originating in a gland in the man's cheek. The patient's state became critical, and on May 9 Dr. Briggin had him moved to St. Vincent's Hospital in Staten Island. On Tuesday, May 16, "Mettin" died. Dr. Briggin filed a death certificate for "Richard J. Mettin." The following day, on Wednesday the 17th, the body was cremated, and on May 18 the Bund's newspaper, Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter, announced the death of Richard J. Mettin, its national treasurer.

As treasurer of the Bund and the Bund's newspaper, Mettin was in an excellent position to know of manipulations in funds alleged to have occurred during the two-and-one-half-year reign of Fritz Kuhn as the Bund's fuhrer. The Hour has learned that Mettin was the key witness of the case, which was being pressed by Commissioner of Investigation William B. Herlands, and that he "talked" in the two months of closed-door hearings. Since his death was announced by the Bund, two queries have been advanced in interested circles:

1. Is it not a queer coincidence that Mettin is no more when he is most needed to talk to Herlands' investigators?
2. Could Mettin be alive, but someone else substituted for him and proved dead to stop investigators from looking for the real man?

The Hour learns that a thorough sifting of Mettin's strange

case has been started by the New York Department of Investigation. The many mysterious circumstances surrounding "Mettin's" sudden end and the body's prompt cremation will doubtless make investigation difficult, but city officials have become convinced that more is behind the story than the few brief paragraphs which found their way into the metropolitan press at the time "Mettin's" death was announced.

One of the odd circumstances is that when Mettin (or his substitute) took ill he called in a doctor who had never attended his family before. Dr. Briggin, never having heard of Mettin and his peculiar importance before, gave no special thought to the patient's death, and signed the death certificate permitting cremation. This, of course, eliminated any special notification of the Staten Island medical examiner, Dr. Mendel Jacobi, and a possible autopsy. The Mettin who died did not wear glasses and had not worn them for several days before being taken ill, although the real Mettin's friends and acquaintances knew him as a near-sighted man who always wore heavy shell-rimmed glasses. At St. Vincent's Hospital the patient was kept in a private room, in great secrecy. No ceremony accompanied the prompt cremation, which took place at the Rose Hill Crematorium, Linden, New Jersey. Since then, the whereabouts of the real Mettin's wife and sister, with whom he lived, have been blanketed in complete mystery. No one answers inquirers' bell at the modest two-family stucco house at Clifton, S. I., where the Mettins resided for ten years prior to last month.

On May 6, the day "Mettin" was taken ill, the real Mettin was seen at a luncheon given at the Hotel Astor for Senator Robert R. Reynolds of North Carolina. The table, at which Fritz Kuhn and nine other Bund leaders sat, was reserved in the name of "Richard J. Mettin and guests." Conflicting descriptions of Mettin have been given by reporters who saw him at the Herlands investigation, and by newspapermen who saw him at the Reynolds luncheon. The Hour, however, hears reliably that the real Richard J. Mettin was a stocky and jovial individual, forty years of age. He seemed to observers to be more of the type who had turned to the Bund in a weak unthinking moment, and was confused about his Nazi ideology, in direct contrast to the more deliberate and hard-bitten men of Fritz Kuhn's kind. Confronted with the seriousness of the Bund's mess, he was willing to talk, and so might have come his disappearance.

Mettin was the second of the men under investigation by Herlands' office to disappear. The other was Fritz Schwoiering, Staten Island fuhrer, who sailed for Germany, with his wife and daughter but without passport, on the night of May 3 aboard the Hamburg. Schwoiering was business manager of the Wackruf und Beobachter.

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MORE ON TRANSPORT: Newspaper dispatches of June 7, advising that the Nazis propose the building of a major automobile road across Paraguay, bear out the predictions of our survey "Nazis Reach Out for Latin American Transport," published in The Hour for April 30 and reprinted in "Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U. S. Senate," Part 16, May 2, 1939, pp. 475-77.

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## NAZIS USE THEIR BOLIVIAN SUCCESS TO DRIVE AGAINST CHILE

German Officers Plot "Trojan Horse" to Crush Democracy at Santiago.- Having Captured Bolivian Oil and Tin, Reich Wants Chilean Nitrates.

Two German officers, who helped Senor Busch prepare his seizure of power in Bolivia on April 25 last, are now busy intriguing for similar feats in Chile. They are chosen by the Nazis' chief plotting command in Berlin to undermine and destroy the People's Front in Chile, whose government has recently shown much energy in checking "Sudeten Schemes" in that southern republic.

They are Major Wilhelm Rausch and Captain Hans Stokelshagen, close friends of the freshly-made Bolivian dictator. A path to the sea for the land-enclosed Bolivia, cutting across Chile, is among the prizes promised by the Nazis to their pal at La Paz. This information comes to The Hour from Berlin and Paris, and is confirmed by Latin American sources.

Major Rausch, of the Reich's general staff, served in the Bolivian army during the bitter Chaco warfare with Paraguay. Captain Stokelshagen is one of the most notorious and shrewd officers on the staff of Colonel Walter Nicolai, chief of the Reichswehr's spy service in Berlin.

Stokelshagen has been closely linked with the German settlers and agents in Argentina in their plot of stirring up trouble in Patagonia. The year prior to his "visit" in Bolivia he took a furtive hand in the oil controversy between Mexico on the one hand and the British and American interests on the other. His task was to turn the Mexican oil dispute to the advantage of Hitler's Reich.

Whether or not the crafty captain succeeded, it was apparently good training for his Bolivian responsibilities: in May, a few brief weeks after Senor Busch seized power, a \$15,000,000 agreement was concluded between La Paz and Berlin for the barter of Bolivian oil and other raw materials for German manufactured goods. The new air base, which early in June the Nazi Reich acquired in Bolivia in exchange for arms, is expected to serve not only Germany's trans-Atlantic planes and as a potential threat to the United States but also in the Nazis' drive against Chile.

## Nazi Agents Come to "Explore" Chile

Both Major Rausch and Captain Stokelshagen are now in Chile, on a trip of "exploration." They are attempting to line up their widespread German contacts in that country to join with Chilean fascists to overthrow the democratically elected government. Fourteen other Nazis were recently sent to Chile aboard the Bremen on its special South American cruise. Incidentally, the boat was filled with American passengers, who were unaware that their participation in the cruise made it financially possible for the Nazi government to send the fourteen propagandists on a tour of Chile. At each Chilean port the fourteen men went ashore to organize meetings

with the aid of native Nazis. At one such meeting a Nazi agent said that the Third Reich would soon be considering the problem of colonial expansion, and that when colonies for Germany are discussed "Latin America cannot be left out."

A key contact of Nazi agents is one "Fritz Bauer." This is the pseudonym of a German staff officer who, for three years prior to the triumph of the Popular Front in Chile, acted as military-technical adviser to the Chilean army generals. "Bauer," according to the plans of the would-be putschists, will again fill his old post of technical adviser to Chile's army. The Nazis feel that from such a post they are certain to preserve the Reich's predominant influence in Chile once they win that country.

The seriousness with which Chile's present government regards the Nazi penetration may be seen in the recent deportation from Chile of Hans Voigt Schmidt, chief of the local agency of the German Railroads. Schmidt was a heavy contributor to anti-Chilean activities and to the Nazi propaganda news-service "Transocean." The Nazi threat from the Nazi-run Bolivia also caused Chile's democratic militia to intensify its precautions against a day when the foreign reactionaries and their local dupes and allies may attack the duly elected government at Santiago.

#### South American Resources and North American Jobs

Chile's nitrates, copper and iron are the main magnets drawing the Nazis, just as Bolivia's oil and tin were chiefly responsible for the Nazi coup at La Paz. Significantly, it was Dionisio Foianini, Bolivia's minister of mines and petroleum, who acted as Senor Busch's right-hand man in carrying out the April 25 coup d'etat. The same Foianini temporarily took over Bolivia's foreign office when its head, Eduardo Diez de Medina, was ousted by Busch for allowing refugees from the Nazi Reich to come to Bolivia. While Busch is partly of German descent, Foianini is part-Italian.

Bolivian tin, by the way, has not received its due share of attention as a mainspring of Nazi-Bolivian politics. The world's tin, a metal vital in peacetime industry and indispensable in time of war, comes from two sources: in the east, from British Malay peninsula and Dutch Indies; in the west, from Bolivia. According to statistics of the German Metallgesellschaft, during February of this year Bolivian mines for the first time led the world's tin production. Rumors about Bolivia had flooded the tin market throughout April, up to the fateful 25th. On the very day that the U. S. House of Representatives passed a bill permitting the storing and purchase of strategic war-materials, including tin, Busch dissolved his parliament and proclaimed his dictatorship.

German geologists and engineers have already replaced Americans in most of the Bolivian oil fields formerly owned by the Standard Oil Company. The same process of replacement is now expected in other economic branches of Bolivia -- and of Chile, if the Nazis win their ruthless drive upon that country.

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## HITLER CLAIMS ISLANDS OFF ECUADOR

Nazi sources in Germany corroborate the view recently expressed by El Comercio, a newspaper of Quito, Ecuador, that Germans residing in the Galapagos Islands would demand annexation by the Reich. Hamburger Fremdenblatt, published in Hamburg, Germany, and known to be a mouthpiece of Hitler's foreign office, on May 18 printed an article in which "historic" German claims to the Galapagos were emphasized.

The Galapagos lie off the coast of Ecuador in the Pacific. They belong to Ecuador and are a short airplane hop from the Panama Canal. In the article entitled "Galapagos Politics" the Nazi writer asserts that the United States has forced Ecuador to accept its bid for purchase of the islands. Disputing the American claim, the article refers to the Robinson Crusoe adventure of the eccentric German Dr. Ritter in 1931, who for a long time was sole resident on the islands. However, the writer continues, Germany's right to the islands is based more strongly on the fact that in 1912 Ecuador first offered the islands for sale to Kaiser Wilhelm. Lacking Nazi "foresight" the kaiser's government rejected the proposal. The Nazi concludes that the new Germany would not fail to assume its "historic responsibilities" toward the Galapagos.

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## NAZIS MAKE SPANISH-LANGUAGE FILMS FOR THE AMERICAS

Hispano-Film is the name of a German-run organization now operating in Berlin and Burgos for the express purpose of producing Spanish-language motion pictures to be distributed in South and Central America, also in the Philippines as well as New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, California and other states of North America where Spanish is understood or spoken. Forty Spanish actors and actresses were recently brought to Berlin to take part in such films. Franco's Falangists will cooperate in the production and distribution of these pictures. Hispano-Film is headed by a Nazi German from the Sudeten region.

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## REICH UNDERSELLS TURKEY IN U. S. ON HER OWN TOBACCO

With great bitterness Turkish newspapers expose the fact that Turkish tobacco, recently sold to the Reich, is now being resold to the American market at prices lower than those at which the Turks sell directly to the United States. The Hour is advised that the Nazis are doing this for two reasons: 1. To "punish" Turkey for her pact with Great Britain, 2. To get in a hurry the desperately needed and highly appreciated U. S. dollars.

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## WORD FROM GENEVA

## Nazi-Fascists in Severe Setback

By ROBERT DELL

The Hour has received the following special correspondence from Mr. Dell, its editorial consultant:

Geneva, May 31, 1939

On returning to Geneva after an absence of six months in the United States I am glad to find a great improvement, from the anti-fascist point of view, in the situation in Switzerland as a whole. The German Nazis and Italian Fascists and their Swiss friends and supporters have suffered a severe setback.

Pro-Nazi sentiment was stronger in French-speaking Switzerland La Suisse Romande -- than in the much larger German-speaking part of the country and was particularly strong among the bourgeoisie of Geneva. Cities like Basel and Bern, which were intensely pro-German during the World War, became exactly the contrary when Germany became Nazi. There were more Nazi sympathizers in Zurich but even there they were a small minority.

When I left Geneva in the beginning of last November, the whole local press, with a few exceptions, was more or less pro-Nazi. Most Genevese papers had enthusiastically welcomed the Munich capitulation and applauded Neville Chamberlain as a hero. Now the tone of the local newspapers has changed and they defend Hitler no longer. Moreover, in the recent election for the city council of Geneva the fascists lost six of the eight seats that they had previously held. The fascist party of Geneva is now in a state of decomposition and its leader has retired into private life. In Zurich the Fascists lost all their seats on the city council.

This change is due partly to Hitler's aggression against the remnant of Czechoslovakia in March, partly to an immense popular reaction against the numerous exposures of Nazi activities in Switzerland during the last six months.

Unfortunately, whereas the Swiss people is sound, the Swiss federal government is less so. M. Motta, the minister for foreign affairs, who is a Roman Catholic and a great admirer of Mussolini, continues to play into the hands of the dictators, to minimize the Nazi intrigues, and even to make excuses for them. Some five months ago it became known that German students ready to take risks ("einsatzbereit") would be given financial aid by the German government to go to Swiss universities. There was a storm of protest throughout Switzerland, and the National Union of Swiss Students called the attention of the federal government to the matter. M. Motta replied that he had been assured by the German government that "einsatzbereit" did not mean that the students were entrusted with any political mission and that on the contrary they were given strict instructions not to engage in political propaganda. Presumably M. Motta believed this. Nobody else did.

## ONE MORE GENERAL GOES IN HITLER'S PURGE

The Hour is dependably informed that Fieldmarshal Hermann Goering recently dismissed Lieutenant-General von Roques, head of the huge Reich Air Defense Bund. In this, Goering followed Hitler's orders to strengthen the Nazi party domination of the military forces (see The Hour of May 30 and Anthony Eden's Yorkshire Post of June 2).

General von Roques' dismissal comes not long after that of his predecessor, General Grimme of artillery, who also fell into disfavor with Fatty Hermann. The new air defense chief is General von Schroeder, a Nazi party member of old standing. The Air Bund has a membership of 12,000,000, but anti-Nazi groups have secretly managed to win important posts in the organization. Among the signs of their activity have been cleverly worded articles in Sirene, the Bund's official publication. While ostensibly supporting Nazi war measures, these articles have actually emphasized the horrors of a possible war, especially for the civilian population. Typical of such statements is the following sentence taken from an article in the latest May issue of Sirene: "Even now the distant, unreal possibility of wartime experiences, with all their dangers for society, have obviously and seriously disturbed our women."

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## INSULT TO INJURY

The largest concentration camp in Czechoslovakia is established by the Nazi invaders near the town of Tabor. The choice is deliberate. "Tabor" in the Czech language means "camp." Early in the fifteenth century it was the site of a free camp of the Hussites who, under the leadership of the Czech national hero, John Zizka, successfully united against the Germans and reactionaries of the time. Tabor thus has a historical symbolical significance to Czechs. By selecting it for the largest place of torture in Czechia, the Nazis are acting in the same spirit in which a conquering horde would have acted in America by establishing the largest concentration camp for captive American patriots at no less a place than Valley Forge.

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## DANZIG TIMETABLED

New timetables of the Reich's railroads, issued as of May 15, contain maps which include Danzig within the German territory. Some observers hold this as a proof that the grab of Danzig was indeed planned by the Nazis for early or middle May but that the plan was postponed because of the firmer attitude shown by London and Paris under the pressure of British and French public opinion. However, the new schedule is to be in effect until October 1. So we may yet expect Danzig's capture during the summer.

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## NAZIS LACK RAW MATERIALS DESPITE CONQUESTS

## Are Fast Approaching Serious Crisis

Germany's war economy is at a crucial stage. The leaders of the Third Reich must choose between desperately lowering the living standard of the German people, or slowing the pace of rearmament. Unless, of course, Chamberlain feeds new Munichs to Hitler, and/or Hitler succeeds in his new barter on a world-wide scale.

The need for foreign raw materials to further the rearmament and to maintain the civil export industries of the Reich is the key to this dilemma. The Anschluss with Austria, the acquisition of the Sudetenland, and the conquest of Czechoslovakia and Memel, far from giving Germany economic self-sufficiency, have brought her a disastrously unfavorable trade balance and an increased dependence upon foreign imports.

Certain German industrialists, worried by the situation, sent Schacht a memorandum before his resignation as Reichsbank president in which they stated: "While total raw material imports have not changed from last year's level, the consumption of materials by the armament industry is obviously far greater than last year. Thus civil industry is forced somehow or other to get on with still less raw materials." (Neue Weltbuehne, Paris, Feb. 9) Latest Reich figures show that this trend continues.

## Austria Proves Tremendous Economic Burden to Reich

Neither Austria nor the Sudeten territories contributed many vital raw materials to the Reich. Both regions are dependent on imports and so heavily drained the Reich's foreign exchange in 1938 as to be largely responsible for converting a favorable trade surplus of 443,000,000 marks for 1937 into a trade deficit of 432,400,000 marks in 1938. Of this deficit, the Reich and the Sudeten lands contributed but 192,000,000 marks, Austria accounting for the remainder. In the first quarter of 1939 the Reich's trade deficit mounted to 116,000,000 marks, a trend which if extended throughout the year would make 1939 a worse foreign-trade year than even 1938. Again the new Reich territories contributed 75 per cent of this deficit.

April of 1939 saw a catastrophic fall in both German exports and imports despite a slight export surplus. An indication of Hitler's policy can be seen in the fact that with total imports falling, metal ore imports essential to war industry continued to increase, while food imports dropped still further.

This deficit would not be a serious matter for a nation with ample resources and adequate reserves of gold and foreign exchange. As for Germany's gold, except for a war chest estimated at perhaps 100,000,000 marks, there is no appreciable supply remaining. The acute lack of foreign exchange was reflected in a March decree liquidating the last private holdings of foreign securities. Successive years of compulsory levies, such as the last loan forced upon the banks, rising taxes and confiscated reserves have virtually denuded the German capital market. On April 21,

1939, Deutsche Volkswirt with a startling frankness summed up the situation: "Even the pact with Rumania ... and the energetically proclaimed 'Axis-economy' cannot gloss over the fact that for foreign trade the problem of payments, of obtaining international exchange, is the key question."

Gold and foreign exchange grabbed in Vienna were used to cover the imports of 1938, and the reserves taken with the Sudetenland have likewise been used up. While these, along with Austria's timber, iron ore and magnesite were a boon to the Reich, it is known that Austria, in 1936, obtained one-half her raw materials abroad against Germany's one-fifth. Austria was able to cover her food requirements to only 73%, compared with Germany's 82%. Yet, due to the record consumption of timber and fuel wood used in 1938 to produce the many "ersatz" goods, Greater Germany herself now faces a timber shortage despite the acquisition of Austrian and Bohemian forests. According to the April issue of the Commerz und Privat Bank Wirtschafts-Bericht, "the great demand for wood (early in 1939) was only partially supplied by domestic cuttings and imports." The Sudetenland, with its predominant export industries and its lack of cereals and fats, likewise increased the Reich's dependence upon foreign imports.

#### Rape of Czechoslovakia Also Provided No Solution

The seized Czech gold and currency reserves are believed to approximate 320,000,000 marks and can cover German imports for a few months. The stocks of foodstuffs are already nearing exhaustion, the last carload of wheat leaving Bohemia May 14. The Czech war potential and excess reserves of timber and magnesite are of great value to Germany. Yet she faces the same problem as on the eve of conquest. Bohemia and Moravia lack all essential raw materials except brown coal. To buy these materials Czechoslovakia has to export products of her own manufacturing industries. "Czechoslovakia was dependent almost wholly on imports for her metal supply," the German Business Research Institute commented on March 25. "Characteristic of the former Czechoslovakian economy was its great dependence on exports and thus on the world market ... Whether the region can keep its markets (as a member of the Greater Reich) remains to be seen."

The magnificent Czech armament plant, an undoubted asset, intensifies Reich reliance on foreign materials. Resources of lignite, coal, lead and manganese were sufficient only for Czechoslovakia's own industries. In oil, cotton, wool and textile fibers the Czechs, as the Reich, required foreign supplies. In foodstuffs the Czechs consumed their entire cereal crop and imported fats. Their beet sugar surplus will more intensify the Reich's own necessity to export this product.

Memel, too, adds further headaches since two-thirds of its industry are composed of textile-, food- and paper-goods establishments which require raw materials already lacking in Germany.

#### Balkan Region Weak In Essential Minerals

When the Czech gold reserves are exhausted the Reich will face the choice of foregoing foreign raw materials needed for arming, or cutting the trade deficit by boosting exports. The Reich's intensive trade

campaigns in the Balkans have permitted the unloading of German goods in return for greater supplies of cereals, timber and petroleum; it is the only region of the world where German exports rose in the first four months of this year. But already more than 40% of all Balkan exports belong to the Reich and account for but 12% of Reich imports. Yugoslavia's mines may cover part of the Reich's needs for iron ore, bauxite, copper, lead and zinc, but only a very small part. And with Yugoslavia seeking to develop her own metal plants, the portion in the future will be still smaller. The Reich's little neighbors are reluctant to risk complete dependence on Nazi Germany, despite the fact that England, France, Switzerland and other non-Axis powers are withholding capital loans to these Balkan countries in what many claim is a concealed effort to aid Nazi penetration. Thus a French copper company in Yugoslavia made a profit in 1937 far exceeding the total investment, but now is yielding to Germany in Bulgaria claiming that it does not have the capital required to develop the Bulgarian copper mines!

Yet, should the entire Balkans come under the Nazi thumb, their share in Reich imports at present production levels would reach 17 to 20%, leaving a big margin for the Reich to find and pay for elsewhere.

#### Reich Living Standards Face New Attack to Boost Trade

Within the Reich, exports could be boosted by cutting state orders, most of which go to the war industries. This is unlikely. Or the goods and living standard of the German citizen may be further cut. This is far more likely. By cutting standards of the people's living, the Reich can -- and does -- limit import of foodstuffs, using the money thus spared to import raw materials for war needs. The lowering of wages gives the Reich lower costs of production, and Nazi Germany thus undersells its competitors on the world market.

In January Hitler declared before the Reichstag that the Reich must "export or die." The Reich did not increase exports and it did not die. It moved East into Czechoslovakia and into Memel. The Reich might strike again in the East. But the entire Southeast of Europe, including Poland, possesses insufficient primary materials to satisfy the Reich's present needs. Even the famed Rumanian oil production, the total of which might supply the Reich's peacetime demand, has fallen 26% in the last two years. Reich experts themselves quote Professor Masovei of the Bucharest Geological Institute to the effect that Rumanian oil wells will be dry in six to eight years.

While agriculturally, therefore, the Reich's hold on Southeastern Europe might turn any food blockade into just an "inconvenience," complete economic domination of this area will neither satisfy the appetite of Hitler's war machine, nor provide a firm economic base for a prolonged war of major proportions. War is nonetheless possible precisely because Hitler may feel forced to do something about that very lack of raw materials.